

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 00731 01 OF 02 021527Z
ACTION BIB-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7749
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
LAMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 3300
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUCHAREST 0731

BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, CSCE, US, RO
SUBJECT: RIGHT OF REPLY TO RFE BROADCASTS

REF: STATE 16738

1. SUMMARY: IN TWO-AND-HALF HOUR CONVERSATION THAT WAS ANIMATED
BUT AT ALL TIMES CORDIAL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF AGERPRES, NICOLAE
PUICEA, MADE IT VERY PLAIN--WITHOUT EVER ACTUALLY SAYING NO--
THAT GOR WOULD NOT TAKE UP BIB ON ITS OFFER OF RIGHT TO REPLY.
PUICEA IS SAME OFFICIAL WITH WHOM BIB MEMBER ANATOLE SHUB
MET IN MAY OF LAST YEAR, AND HE REPEATED VIRTUALLY ALL POINTS
HE HAD MADE AT THAT TIME. DURING DIFFUSE DIALOGUE, PUICEA
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PAGE 02 BUCAR 00731 01 OF 02 021527Z

FREQUENTLY RESORTED TO MAXIMS AND PARABLES TO CONVEY
HIS POINTS IN OBLIQUE FASHION, BUT BOTTON LINE IS THAT
GOR STILL VIEWS RFE AS ITS ADVERSARY AND CANNOT, NOW OR
IN THE FUTURE, SEE THAT ITS INTERESTS WOULD PERMIT TO
DEAL WITH RFE IN SPIRIT OF FRIENDLY COMPETITION, MUCH
LESS IN PARTNERSHIP THAT HE FELT BIB OFFER IMPLIED.
END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY POL OFF REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT IN CONTEXT OF FOLLOW-UP TO CONVERSATION WITH SHUB WAS GRANTED PROMPTLY. WHEN PUICEA HAD FINALLY EXHAUSTED HIS REPERTOIRE OF CRITICAL--THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT VITRIOLIC--COMMENTS ON RFE (AN HOUR-AND-A-HALF), WITH OCCASIONAL REJOINDERS FROM EMBOFFXVMMVMM) WITH STATEMENT THAT GOR COULD NEVER VIEW RFE AS PARTNER, EMBOFF EXPRESSED HOPE THAT HE HAD NOT WRITTEN OFF BIB'S EFFORTS TO ENSURE OBJECTIVITY AND FAIRNESS IN JCE BROADCASTING. MR. SHUB HAD LEFT WITH IMPRESSION THAT GOR MIGHT TAKE UP HIS OFFER AND PROVIDE BIB WITH COMMENTS AND SPECIFIC CRITICISMS OF RFE BROADCASTING, AND IT WAS REGRETTABLE THAT IT HAD NOT. IN SAME SPIRIT, MR. GRONOUSKI IS MAKING OFFER OF TIME FOR THE RIGHT OF REPLY TO SPECIFIC BROADCASTS WHICH GOR MIGHT FEEL VIOLATE GUIDELINES AND RADIO'S MISSION OF PROVIDING OBJECTIVE COMMENTARY AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AS WELL AS FACTUAL NEWS REPORTING. PUICEA ALLOWED THAT HE HAD HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT SUCH AN OFFER BEING MADE TO EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. EMBOFF STATED THAT MR. GRONOUSKI HAD MADE SUCH A PROPOSAL AND WISHED TO SOLICIT THE VIEWS OF GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOPING IT FURTHER.

3. PUICEA REPLIED THAT IT WOULD HARDLY BE FITTING FOR GOR TO SPEAK TO ITS OWN PEOPLE OVER A "STATELESS" CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BUCAR 00731 01 OF 02 021527Z

RADIO AND THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR ITS REPRESENTATIVES TO GO TO RFE WHERE THEIR PRESENCE WOULD CONFIRM LEGITIMACY OF THE STATION. EMBOFF CLARIFIED PROPOSAL PER PARAS 6B AND 6D REFTEL, TO WHICH PUICEA REPLIED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT--IN THE MANNER OF ASIANS, WHO TOOK SOMETIMES FIVE HOURS, SOMETIMES FIVE YEARS, SOMETIMES 50 YEARS TO THINK ABOUT A QUESTION. PUICEA WENT ON TO STATE THAT HE WAS AN ADMIRER OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT OF COMPETITION IN ANY AND ALL FIELDS, BUT THAT IN COMPETITION IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FIND TWO WINNERS: WHO WOULD BE THE WINNER IN THIS INSTANCE? EMBOFF NOTED THAT IN SPORTS THERE WERE OFTEN DRAWS, AS THERE WERE ALSO IN DEBATES, AND THAT IF GOR FOUND A BROADCAST THAT IT CONSIDERED DISTORTED AND SLANDEROUS AND PRODUCED A COGENT REBUTTAL, IT COULD VERY WELL COME OUT THE WINNER IN ANY GIVEN INSTANCE. PUICEA LIKENED THIS TO A MAN AGREEING

TO BE PCT IN THE FACE BY EGGS AND POTATOES INSTEAD OF BRICKBATS. HE SUGGESTED THAT NOW T Z BOTH VOA AND RFE WERE FUNDED BY CONGRESS, THERE WAS NO NEED FOR BOTH. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S EXPLANATION OF DIFFERENT BRIEFS OF TWO SERVICES, PUICEA ADVOCATED EXPANDING

THE ONE AND DISPENSING WITH THE OTHER FOR, IRRESPECTIVE
OF HOW IT IS DRESSED UP, RFE REMAINS WHAT IT IS AND
LHHANGE OF MASTER AND SOURCE OF FINANCING NOTWITHSTANDING,
IT REMAINS, AS WE WOULD SAY, A HEAVY CROSS TO BEAR.
HE QUOTED SEVERAL PROVERBS TO AMPLIFY HIS POINT.

4. ROMANIA HAS ITS OWN INTERESTS, PUICEA REITERATED
IN THE FINAL ROUND, INTERESTS WHICH ARE NOT IDENTICAL
TO BUT REALLY MORE-OR-LESS OPPOSED TO RFE, AND THERZORE
PROBLEMS WITH RFE MUST BE SOLVED BY THOSE RESPONSIBLE
FOR IT, NOT BY ROMANIANS. HE LIKENED PROGRESS WITH RFE
TO PROGRESS IN DISARMAMENT: ALTHOUGH ONE HOPED FOR GREAT
ADVANCES, ONE HAD TO LOOK FOR SMALL STEPS. HE AWAITED
SUCH SMALL STEPS AND THOUGHT HE HAD DETECTED A FEW AFTER
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PAGE 04 BUCAR 00731 01 OF 02 021527Z

MR. SHUB'S VISIT, BUT THEY HAD BEEN FEEBLE AND HAD COME
TO NAUGHT. THE DIALOGUE REMAINS OPEN, HE STATED: POSSIBLY
AFTER A THIRD VISIT THERE MIGHT BE SOME STEPS. AFTER THIS
VISIT? NO, AFTER THIS, THE SECOND VISIT, NO STEPS.

5. COMMENT: GIVEN BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL INCOMPATIBILITIES,
RESPONSE WAS WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. CARDINAL
PRINCIPLE OF GOR MEDIA POLICY IS NEVER TO DISPARAGE IN
WORD OR PRINT AND ANY GIVEN COUNTRY WITH WHICH GOR CONSIDERS ITS
RELATIONS TO BE GOOD, AND GOR IS PARTICULARLY GALLED BY FACT THAT

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 00731 02 OF 02 021548Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUCHAREST 0731

AN ACTIVITY SUCH AS RFE IS SPONSORED BY USG. AT SAME TIME, GENTEEL QUALITY OF GOR RESPONSE THROUGH SPOKESMAN AS POLISHED AS PUICEA REFLECTS GOR'S OFT-STATED WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS, IN THE PROPER SETTING, ANY ISSUE OTHERSDQ MAY WISH TO BROACH. PERCEPTION OF ITS INTERESTS IN OVERALL CONTEXT OF ROMANIAN-U.S. BILATERAL RELATIONS AND PERHAPS ALSO FINANCIAL ASPECT OUTWEIGH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS APROPOS JAMMING, BUT CORRESPONDING ADVANTAGES ARE CLEARLY ABSENT IN THIS INSTANCE AND GOR IS CERTAINLY ALSO AWARE OF TASS' VITRIOLIC EXPRESSION OF SOVIET ATTITUDE.

6. PUICEA'S REMARKS SUBTLY CONVEYED IMPRESSION GOR RECOGNIZES MORE OF A CHANGE IN RFE THAN IT IS WILLING TO ADMIT. RFE TREATMENT OF CEAUSESCU REMAINS IT MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BUCAR 00731 02 OF 02 021548Z

EGREGIOUS OFFENSE IN ROMANIAN EYES, BUT OTHERWISE PUICEA SEEMED AT LEAST AS CONCERNED BY RFE'S ALLEGED FOREIGN INFLUENCE AS BY ITS DOMESTIC IMPACT. HE COMPLAINED REPEATEDLY ABOUT RFE'S "ENGLISH LANGUAGE BULLETINS" (RESEARCH STUDIES?) AND THEIR WIDE USE BY EUROPEAN PRESS AS BASIS FOR "POISONOUS" ARTICLES ABOUT ROMANIA. RFE PROVIDES RESEARCH STUDIES--STUDIES ARE USED BY EUROPEAN PRESS-RFE THEN QUOTES PRESS: THIS "VICIOUS CIRCLE" AGITATED PUICEA AS GREATLY AS RFE'S LESE MAJESTE. THUS, HE CLAIMED, REPORTERS CAME TO ROMANIA NOT WITH OPEN MINDS, BUT WITH MINDS ALREADY POISONED BY THE RFE VIEW- POINT AND, INSTEAD OF LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF ROMANIAN PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT, SPENT THEIR TIME FERRETING OULB PEOPLE LIKE PAUL GOMA.LFGGREY

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